



HISTORICAL *Highlights*

Cohasset Historical Society Newsletter • Summer 2018

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From the President



Dear Members and Friends,

90 years, and we are continuing to make history. The Board welcomes, with great enthusiasm, our newest director, Julia DeWaal. Julia teaches kindergarten at the Osgood School, and will be our liaison to the Cohasset public schools.

Much of this edition of the Society's newsletter highlights Cohasset in 1928, the year the Society was established, and the ensuing 90 years. During 1928, fourteen houses were built.

Three of these are of particular interest to me and hopefully will be to you as well:

- 35 Elm Court, the Charles E. Frates House, built by Alice A. and Charles E. Frates. Charles, a local mason, was 58 in 1928. Living with the Frates was their 28 year-old son Alfred, a salesman. Frates has been a prominent name in the history of Cohasset. Antoine Frates was the first to emigrate from the Portuguese Azores, establishing a home here in the 1850s.
- 217 South Main Street, the James Wilson House. James Wilson, a gardener, was descended from Captain John Wilson who owned what is now the Society's 1810 Capt. John Wilson House, located at 4 Elm Street in the village.
- 130 Gammons Road, Rice Island, the Charles W. Gammons Summer Camp. The Gammons hired an Irish workman, James McMahon, to build Gammons Road, the causeway, and the bridge from Gammons Road to the camp. McMahon worked alone with a wagon, horse and a scoop. He hauled, shoveled and dug to create access to the camp where the Gammons family would entertain friends during the hot summer days.

1928 was a banner year for Cohasset, but also for me. It was the year that two of my dearest friends were born, Mary Hartshorne and Herbert Gleason. Mary was profiled in our last newsletter.

Herbert grew up in Cohasset on Atlantic Avenue, though we did not meet until decades later. He became a close friend when I served as president of the Women's City Club of Boston. He was our lawyer, having recently retired as City Counsel for the City of Boston under Mayor Kevin White.

Painting Cohasset: 90 Summers, the Society's latest exhibit, which runs from June 21 to September 21, also is our way of celebrating the beauty of the town and how it has inspired so many fine artists to come here to paint, a tradition that keeps happening. I encourage you to come with friends near and far to the Pratt Building for this wonderful show.

My very warmest regards,

Kathleen L. O'Malley, *President*

Banner image: See page 3

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Cohasset Paintings by Renowned Artists Come Home

Lynne DeGiacomo and Paula Morse

The Cohasset Historical Society is pleased to announce the June 21 opening of its summer art exhibit ***Painting Cohasset: 90 Summers***. The exhibition includes paintings from the Society's own collection as well as loans from art galleries and private collectors. A number of these have never been shown publicly.

We were inspired by a series of articles written by former board member John Connell for past issues of *Historical Highlights*. John, a dealer as well as a collector of antiques, knew of several artists who had come to Cohasset in the mid-19th century to paint our rocky coastline, secluded coves and gentle marshes. His brief notes on artists, such as Alfred Thompson Bricher, Sanford Robinson Gifford, Frank Henry Shapleigh and Maurice Brazil Prendergast, were eagerly awaited by our readers.

We then began a search of museum holdings, auction records and galleries for titles of paintings depicting scenes of Cohasset during the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries. We were amazed at what we were able to find. The next step was somewhat harder. We had to reach out to the owners, which meant going first to auction houses and galleries requesting that they ask their buyers to contact us.

That meant that in some cases, their records would be going back over ten years. Once again, we were incredulous for the help that galleries and auction houses were willing to give to us. Owners, in turn, have been overwhelmingly supportive. Cohasset's Blue Heron Fine Art was the first to offer to loan us one of their paintings. Their enthusiasm for our proposed exhibit gave us the confidence to proceed.

On display will be about 40 works of art painted in Cohasset

from 1850 to 1940. The exhibit features coastal scenes and seascapes by Luminist painters such as Alfred Thompson Bricher and Robert Swain Gifford, as well as the Hudson River School artists Winckworth Allan Gay and Frank Henry Shapleigh.

The exhibit has taken on greater significance with generous loans from the New York dealers, Betty Krulik Fine Art and Questroyal Fine Art, of paintings by William Van de Velde Bonfield and Francis Augustus Silva, respectively, and Williams College Museum of Art for two Post-Impressionist watercolors by Maurice Brazil Prendergast. Indeed, the Bonfield was chosen for the invitation because we felt it best captures the essence of both Cohasset and the exhibit.

A champagne reception will be held on June 23 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. to celebrate the opening of this exceptional show. The reception is free for members and \$25 for non-members. Please RSVP by June 19 - at cohassethistory@yahoo.com or 781.383.1434.

Painting Cohasset: 90 Summers will run from June 21 to September 21, 2018. Admission is free to members; \$5 for non-members. The Pratt Building, 106 South Main Street, Cohasset, will be open 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday and from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. alternate Saturdays from June 30 through August 25.

Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to see these remarkable paintings gathered together in the town that inspired them.

For information about the exhibit, please contact the Society.



Sandy Beach, Cohasset, Massachusetts | William Van de Velde Bonfield | Private Collection, Courtesy of Betty Krulik Fine Art, Ltd. NYC



View of Bassing Beach, 1874, oil | Frank Henry Shapleigh | Cohasset Historical Society



Brush Island and the Chinese House, oil | Artist Unknown | Cohasset Historical Society

Profile of an Artist: Maurice Brazil Prendergast

Lynne DeGiacomo and Paula Morse



Prendergast in 1913,
photo by
Gertrude Käsebier

Maurice Brazil Prendergast was born in Newfoundland and grew up in Boston's South End. He began as a commercial artist but enjoyed the city and the surrounding coastal towns and took his portable watercolors wherever people gathered in parks and seaside resorts for festivals and leisure activities. By the 1880s he and his brother Charles had attracted local patrons who supported their studies abroad. In Paris and Venice between 1891 and 1900 Maurice absorbed the lessons of the Post-Impressionists. From Paul Cezanne and Pierre Matisse, in particular, he learned to

flatten his subjects, creating frieze-like, mosaic patterns.

The bright primary colors he had favored in the 1880s and 1890s were by the 1900s subdued, replaced by blues and greens with touches of yellow, brown and violet. His watercolors were now experimental in technique, with colors applied wet so that they blurred and sparkled like jewels or the reflections of sunlight. The spontaneity of watercolors had allowed him to focus on rhythm and movement and luminosity. He did not turn to painting in oils until after 1904.

In 1900, Prendergast had major exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago and at Macbeth Galleries in New York, which

earned him critical acclaim. He also showed in a National Arts Club exhibition in 1904 and in 1908, with the artists known collectively as The Eight. He had seven works at the historic Armory Show of 1913, and in 1934 there was a retrospective for him at the Whitney Museum of Art. The most recent exhibit of Maurice and his brother Charles was at the New Britain (CT) Museum of American Art, March 9 - June 10, 2018.

Prendergast's style and technique in *Surf Cohasset* and *Surf Nantasket*, both ca. 1900-1905, included in *Painting Cohasset*, mark a significant departure from the quiet Luminism of 19th century artists like Alfred Thompson Bricher and William van de Velde Bonfield (also in the exhibit). Indeed, Prendergast is the only artist in our show who was more interested in the joyous movement of bathers at the beach than in the poetic beauty of its shoreline.



Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) has the largest collection of the brothers Charles and Maurice Prendergast's work in the world, holding approximately 400 paintings, works on paper, reliefs, frames and decorative objects. Eugénie Prendergast (1894-1994), Charles' widow, was an active guardian of their work and reputations. After her husband's death in 1948, she began donating or bequeathing art and the brothers' papers to WCMA in 1983, as well as creating an endowment for ongoing research, publications and programs.



Two water color by Maurice Brazil Prendergast, on loan from the
Williams College Museum of Art
Left: *Surf Nantasket* and above: *Surf Cohasset*

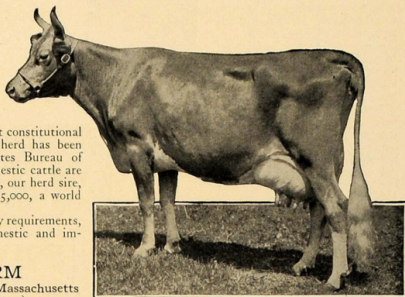
Milk and Vinegar

Julia H. Gleason

OAKS FARM REGISTERED GUERNSEYS

This is the kind we import

We are importers and breeders of fine Guernsey cattle and maintain at all times a large herd at our farm at Cohasset, Mass. Oaks Farm Guernseys have strong frames, good size, great constitutional vigor, healthy in every respect. The herd has been tuberculin tested by the United States Bureau of Animal Industry since 1913. Our domestic cattle are line-bred May Roses. Florham Leader, our herd sire, was purchased by us as a calf for \$25,000, a world record figure. We can take care of almost any Guernsey requirements, males and females of all ages of domestic and imported breeding.



THE OAKS FARM
Cohasset Massachusetts
(Twenty miles from Boston)
S. W. KERR, Manager C. W. BARRON, Proprietor

Charmante 111 of the Glen, imported by us and sold to R. Lawrence Benson, Princeton, N. J.

"Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk," wrote Henry David Thoreau in his journal of 1854. Thoreau was referring to the practice of adding water to milk in order to make a profit. Milk was considered an essential daily nutrient, especially for children, so this was considered a particularly heinous crime. By the 1850s, as more people began to rely on purchased milk rather than owning a cow, the need arose to regulate the dairy industry in order to ensure quality. Boards of Health were established and the office of Inspector of Milk and Vinegar was created. By the 1920s, home delivery of bottled milk and other dairy products in a designated vehicle was a part of everyday life, spreading from the cities to small towns. All aspects of milk production, from the conditions at the dairy farms, to the health of the cows, the transport of the milk and the stores where it was sold were under the supervision of local milk inspectors.

In Cohasset, Selectman Dr. Darius Gilbert was the first milk inspector, appointed in 1910 by the Board of Selectmen who also served as the Board of Health. In that year's Town Report, Gilbert wrote about how important it was to have "clean milk, healthy cows, clean and well ventilated stables and milk rooms." Of major concern was the prevention of contagious diseases, such as smallpox and tuberculosis. Gilbert's responsibilities included keeping records of all persons engaged in the sale of milk. He had the right to enter any place where milk was stored or sold and

take samples. In addition, the owners of vehicles that transported milk had to be licensed and registered with the town with a legible sign on the side of the vehicle. The first regulations regarding the production of milk in Cohasset were laid out in the 1913 Town Report, and in the following year Cohasset residents were invited to consult with the Milk Inspector to find the highest quality milk.

In 1919-1920 Irving F. Sylvester was appointed and served until 1929 as the Collector of Samples of Milk and Vinegar. In 1928 he was paid \$150 (about \$2100 today) for collecting milk samples; George E. Bolling, who tested the samples, received \$24.50 (\$342 today). In a small town like Cohasset the focus was on the bacterial content rather than the presumption that the milk was diluted or colorized; this practice was common in the city but not in the country. The vinegar was tested to make sure it had been made from apples, not grapes.

Sylvester provided detailed annual reports. Cohasset had granted ten licenses to sell and deliver milk by 1921. Local dairies included Bates Farm, Homeland Dairy, Litchfield Dairy, Wheelwright Farm and Oaks Farm, by far the largest. During his tenure only one license was refused on the grounds that the water in the applicant's well was of questionable quality. In his last year of office Sylvester was happy to report that throughout the 1920s the quality of milk in Cohasset continued to improve and the vinegar was of a high standard. There were no citations for watering milk.

Although less milk is consumed in the United States today, people still run out to the store for milk, especially when a storm is coming. Retailers take advantage of us today by putting it in the back of the store.

Questions from our Readers

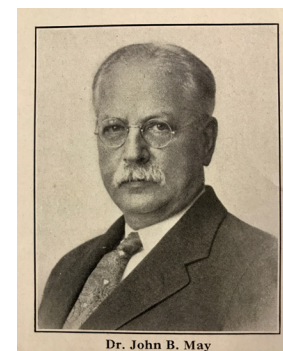
In response to the article profiling Mary Hartshorne in the Winter 2018 *Historical Highlights*, we had a request from a member asking about the history of the Cohasset Country Day School.



In the late 1890s, education became less formal, more natural with less emphasis on book learning, in the hope of providing a richer experience for students. This "back to the country" movement was described in the 1915 publication, *A Handbook of the Best Private Schools in the United States and Canada*: "The educational phase ... is represented by the Country Day School, which combines the best features of the boarding school without separating the boys or girls from home influence."

In Cohasset, Abigail W. and John B. May ran the Cohasset Country Day School from 1928 to 1946. Located in their home at 325 South Main Street, the co-educational school held classes for more privileged students from kindergarten through 4th grade. There were six students per grade. Special instruction in art was also provided.

John May was a noted ornithologist;



Dr. John B. May

he also was the director of a summer boys' camp in the White Mountains providing campers with the unique experience of an extended mountain hike

with an equally extended canoe cruise.



We love to hear from our members. If an article in this issue inspires you to want to know more, contact us. We will answer your question in the next issue.

Plein-Air Slide Show and Painting with Melanie Kozol



New York landscape painter and teacher Melanie Kozol will give a slide show and lecture on *Plein-Air* painting as it relates to the exhibit **Painting Cohasset: 90 Summers** at the Cohasset Historical Society's Pratt Building on Saturday, July 28 (rain date Sunday, July 29) at 11:00 a.m.

See Calendar (back page) for the schedule.

This will be followed by an afternoon workshop and demonstration, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. For those who are interested in the Workshop, Kozol will select a site in Cohasset for an afternoon of painting. She will begin with a drawing and watercolor demonstration. Participants should select a medium - watercolor, drawing, pastel, oils or acrylic - that they have experience with. **This workshop is not for beginners.**

\$50 members, \$60 non-members. For those attending the workshop, plan to bring lunch; a recommended materials list will be sent in advance to attendees.

Please call the Society at 781-383-1434 to reserve a space as the class is limited to 14.



Creek, 2016, watercolor and pencil

Kozol had the good fortune of growing in the summer on the South Shore both in Cohasset and Hull. She has been living in NY for the past 30 years working as an artist and as a teacher of painting and drawing at Pratt Institute and The School of the Arts, 92nd Street Y. She has given *Plein-Air* workshops in Central Park, NYC; Block Island, RI; the Hull Lifesaving Museum; and at Kyoto temples and gardens, Japan.

Meet Allison Donoghue

We are very fortunate to have Allison Donoghue with us as our summer intern this season. Allie will serve as a docent at the Wilson House Museum, and will also help with a variety of projects at the Society. She grew up in Cohasset and will enter her Senior year at Connecticut College this fall. Since 2011, Allie has worked at Plimoth Plantation, for the last few years as a Historical Interpreter, or a "Pilgrim" in the English Village.



Jonathan Clark Ames II portraying John Winslow with Allison Donoghue portraying Mary Chilton



Allison on the front steps of the Pratt Building

Maritime Museum Update

The exterior work has been completed and looks wonderful, with its clapboards, shingles and doors. The paint color is meeting with rave reviews. Restoration work continues on the interior, consequently the museum will not open until the summer of 2019.



Arrangements may be made to tour the building by calling for an appointment.

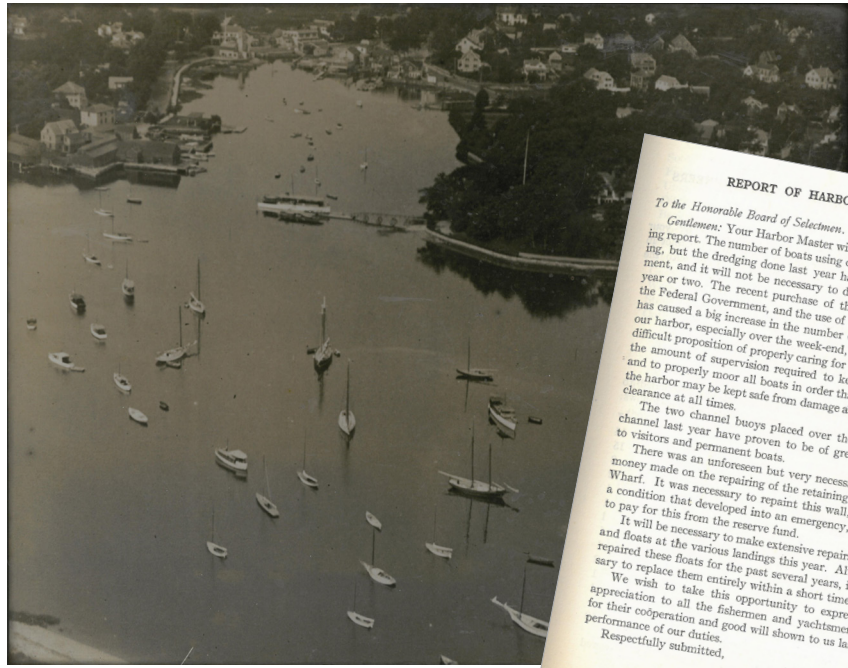
Please contact Lynne DeGiacomo at the Society.

Looking Back on Cohasset Harbor

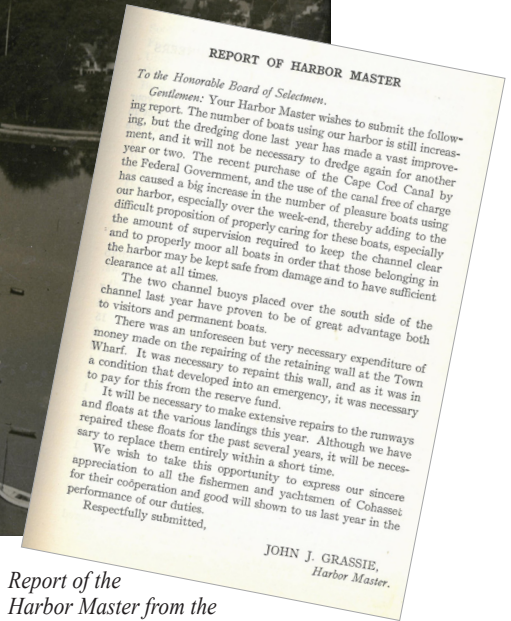
As the weather warms and Cohasset residents start to once again enjoy life on the water for the summer season, it is fun to look back at what was going on in our harbor in 1928.

According to the *Cape Cod Times*, on March 31, 1928 the federal government agreed to pay the original builders of the Cape Cod Canal \$11.5 million for the canal. Since then it has operated as a toll-free waterway. This change in the accessibility of the canal had a direct effect on Cohasset Harbor.

As noted in the report by then Harbor Master, John Grassie in the 1928 Cohasset Town Report "The number of boats using the harbor is increasing, and while recent dredging helped, the purchase of the Cape Cod Canal by the federal government and the use of the canal free of charge, has caused a big increase in the number of pleasure boats using our harbor.



Cohasset Harbor. August 1928 showing all of the pleasure boats including Clarence Barron's yacht "Hourless"



Report of the Harbor Master from the 1928 Cohasset Annual Town Report

When the Witches Came to Town



The Wilson House as it appeared in the movie "The Witches of Eastwick"

Our first official program at the Beechwood Meetinghouse and Museum, held on Saturday, April 21st, was a "Sneak Preview" of the documentary "When the Witches Came to Town" produced by award-winning screenwriter David Fresnia.



Approximately 80 guests attended

As U. S. mail gets more and more expensive, we, along with other non-profit organizations, are turning to email correspondence for routine notifications. Do we have an email address for you? Has your email changed recently? We want to keep our members up to date about programs and events that occur between newsletters through email and Constant Contact.

Send your updated information to cohassethistory@yahoo.com



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SUMMER 2018

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Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 16

Opening of the Wilson House Museum
4 Elm Street
10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

The Maritime Museum will not open this summer. The restoration work continues. We are grateful to the residents of Cohasset for approving the Community Preservation Act funding.

Thursday, June 21

Pratt Building
Exhibit Opening,
Painting Cohasset: 90 Summers
10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
Members: No-charge Non-Members: \$5

Saturday, June 23

Pratt Building
Champagne Opening Reception
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Members: No charge; non-members: \$25

Wednesday, July 25

Beechwood Meetinghouse and Museum
51 Church Street
7:00 p.m. Light Refreshments
7:30 p.m. Speaker, Marie Schlag
Topic: GRACIE, The Journey Back
The restoration of the Gracie banner

Saturday, July 28 Rain date - Sunday, July 29

Plein-Air Slide Show and Lecture with
Melanie Kozol
Pratt Building, 11:00 a.m.
Free

Afternoon Demonstration and Workshop
1:00 to 4:30 p.m. Site in Cohasset TBD
Members: \$50, Non-members: \$60

**Saturday, September 8
Rain Date - Sunday, September 9**
90th Birthday Celebration Clambake at
Sandy Beach

OPEN HOURS Pratt Building • 106 South Main Street • Monday- Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
1810 Captain John Wilson House open Thursdays - Fridays, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
through the end of August. The ca. 1754 Maritime Museum is closed for restoration.